

Town of Underhill

ARPA Funds Use Proposal – PHASE 1

In January 2022, the U.S. Department of Treasury issued an Overview of the Final Rule for the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF), a part of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). These federal funds were extended to state and local municipalities to address impacts of the pandemic with substantial flexibility on how the funds can be allocated based on the local need to help us build a strong, resilient community and support long-term growth and opportunity.

The Final Rule provides extensive information about allowable spending with greater simplicity and the Town of Underhill took the on time permitted “Standard Allowance”, the most flexible choice; allowing us utilize the funds for “government services.” Unless the treasury has stated otherwise government services are any services traditionally provided by the recipient government.

The Town of Underhill has \$696,228.55 remaining in ARPA funds to spend on eligible activities. These funds must be obligated by December 31, 2024 and spent by December 31, 2026.

Information and Instructions:

The Town of Underhill has formed an [ARPA Advisory Committee](#) to review and recommend projects to the Selectboard for consideration. The Selectboard of Underhill will consider the recommended projects and authorize spending. Submission of a completed Phase 1 Proposal is your first step to get your project, concept, or idea in front of the ARPA Advisory Committee. This process is intended to be simple and allow for those requesting funds to do so without providing extensive information initially. The first review of Phase 1 Proposal will be November 14, 2022 and after the meeting you will hear from the Committee on the next steps. Only complete applications will be reviewed. They must be received by email, mail or in person (see Links and More Information) and all applications must be type written and not hand written. Assistance is available if necessary.

We encourage you send in the completed Phase 1 Proposal as soon as possible so we can work with you and make recommendations or provide feedback prior to completing a complete **Phase 2 Application**. We will respond to completed proposals as we review them in committee. **The deadline to submit Phase 1 Proposal is 1/31/2023.** Final recommendations will be forwarded to the Selectboard by 5/31/2023. The Selectboard then has the authority to decide which projects will ultimately be funded. This timeline is subject to change; however, we would like to have the funds obligated as soon as possible so there is a longer period of time for the projects to come to fruition and to ensure that the money is spent by 12/31/2026.

Submit this completed document by:

Email to: jsilpe-katz@underhillvt.gov

Mail to: Town of Underhill PO BOX 120 Underhill, VT 05489

In Person to: Underhill Town Hall, 12 Pleasant Valley Rd. Underhill

Questions or Assistance: Jennifer Silpe-Katz, 802-899-4434 x 2 or at above email

Town of Underhill

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Committee/Group/Individual Requesting Funding: Don Tobi, Town of Underhill Tree Warden

Contact Name: Don Tobi

Phone Number: 802-373-4022 **Email:** Dtobi@uvm.edu, or dtobi@burlingtonelectric.com

Date: 1/31/2023

Proposal Name/Brief Description: Funding for roadside tree work due to impending Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) caused mortality of ash trees.

Ash trees make up roughly 7% of Vermont's forests and are a common roadside tree in Underhill. The EAB has been reported in several neighboring towns and in fact, is present across most of the ash trees' native range. We are one of the last places to become impacted by this insect. Where it has been present it has caused nearly 100% mortality and has caused municipalities to incur costs of hundreds of thousands of dollars to remove and clean up the dead and dying trees. Once dead, ash trees have the unfortunate tendency to become public hazards as they tend to break off in large pieces all at once. If a community waits too long to remove these ahead of time, a single storm could bring down hundreds, possibly falling on pedestrians, vehicles, power lines, and other infrastructure. One of the drivers in the high cost associated with this is waiting too long to do anything about the dead and/or dying trees and then needing to do it all at once after a major storm which then puts the municipality at the mercy of local tree service contractors. This proposal would fund the preemptive removal of ash trees from Town rights-of-ways. This can then be done on a more relaxed pace than would be if a major event dictated otherwise. The fund can also pay for treatment of special single ash trees (such as the two in the veterans park at the Rt.15-Park st. intersection) to prevent EAB infestation and perhaps for some replanting efforts.

Estimated Cost/Description of Estimate Process (use the space here and attach additional pages and any supporting documents):

It is hard to estimate the total cost of this proposal mainly because the total cost could easily become more than several hundred thousand dollars. One of the factors influencing the cost is how the work will get done? Will Town employees do it in off hours? Will local tree services do the work? Or even local logging contractors? The Town of Underhill has used all of these options in the past few years and all are effective depending on the particular situation and special needs such as a bucket truck or tracked feller-buncher. They all come with differing cost estimates. I'm proposing that we institute a "fund" or line item that can roll over from year to year and to start it with some of these funds and then to contribute on an annual basis to hopefully keep the fund available when it is needed. It should be noted that any work associated with the preemptive or reactionary removals of ash will most likely be necessary within the next five year period. I have started doing a roadside inventory of the ash trees in Underhill and have only completed about two miles of Poker hill road (roughly 8 hrs of work) and have already tallied about 300 trees a number of which are already dead. There are a total of 52 miles of class 1,2, and 3 Town roads in Underhill. need to be dealt with.

What does it cost to do this? The most cost-effective method is to have Town road crew personnel do the work, but this comes with limitations due to other responsibilities drawing on their time, and availability of the proper equipment and training to do it safely. Most likely we will have to employ a tree service or other tree/logging contractors. Just to give an idea of costs, we have paid \$10,000 to do tree removals along a 1-mile stretch of road, about \$4,000/day to do a couple other small projects of a half mile or so of road, and up to \$1,000 per tree when a bucket truck is required. All of these costs vary by size of project and length of time necessary for completion. So, I'm thinking a figure of \$200,000 would be a good amount to get things started as we prepare for dealing with this problem.

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Please Answer the following questions by marking the answer in the space provided.

Benefit to Town of Underhill

Does this proposal	YES	NO	Not Sure
Invest in the town without creating a need for additional or ongoing revenue or expenses? Is this a one-time expense?	X		
Benefit a population that was disproportionately impacted by the pandemic?			X
Benefit a population underserved prior to the pandemic?			X
Mitigate and/or help the Town adapt to the effects of climate change?	X		
Improve or create infrastructure for Underhill? Ex. Natural resources, pedestrian access, transportation but not limited to	X		
Align with or impact the goals and priorities of the Town Plan? LINK			X

Comments:

Feasibility of Project

Can this proposal	YES	NO	Not Sure
Be fully planned, estimated and obligated to the Town by December 31, 2024?	X		
Be fully completed and paid for by the end of 2026?	X		
Be used to leverage or match other grants, funds or projects?	X		

Please attach estimates, quotes, drawings, or supporting documents or elaborate in any way you would like. Please note that the ARPA Advisory Committee only recommends projects to the Selectboard and the Selectboard has the ultimate authority to allocate the funds. [17 V.S.A. § 2664](#)

Links and More Information:

Final Rule – Overview at <https://home.treasury.gov/system/files/136/SLFRF-Final-Rule-Overview.pdf>

Final Rule – FAQ's at <https://home.treasury.gov/system/files/136/SLFRF-Final-Rule-FAQ.pdf>

Specific Information for Town of Underhill at https://www.underhillvt.gov/vertical/sites/%7B4E962BB9-B4BB-4504-A3EE-ED54521A1BCE%7D/uploads/Coronavirus_Local_Fiscal_Recovery_Fund_Overview_Presentation_06092022.pdf